

Application No.: 10/042,104
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REMARKS

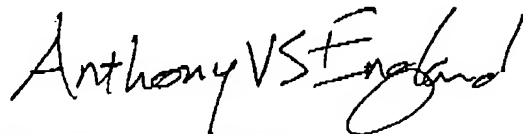
This is a reply to a first Office action, dated December 14, 2004, in which claims 1-3, and 7 were objected to because of informalities. Claims 1, 10, and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rice (6816961) in view of Sawamura (65534874). Claims 2, 11, and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rice and Sawamura and further in view of Menczes (6563379). Claims 4-9 and 13-18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Menczes, Rice and Sawamura and further in view of Trimberger (6263430).

The Office action indicated that claims 3, 12, and 21 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Accordingly, claims 2, 12, and 21 have been rewritten in independent form. Claims 4 and 13 have been amended to change dependency. Claims 4-9 and 13-18, therefore, are allowable because they depend on respectively allowable independent claims. MPEP 2143.03 ("If an independent claim is nonobvious under 35 U.S.C. 103, then any claim depending therefrom is nonobvious," citing *In re Fine*, 837 F.2d 1071, 5 USPQ2d 1596 (Fed. Cir. 1988)). Claims 1, 2, 10, 11, 19, and 20 are herein canceled. Claims 3 and 7 have been amended to correct informalities noted by Examiner.

REQUESTED ACTION

Applicant hereby requests that Examiner grant allowance and prompt passage of the application to issuance.

Respectfully submitted,



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